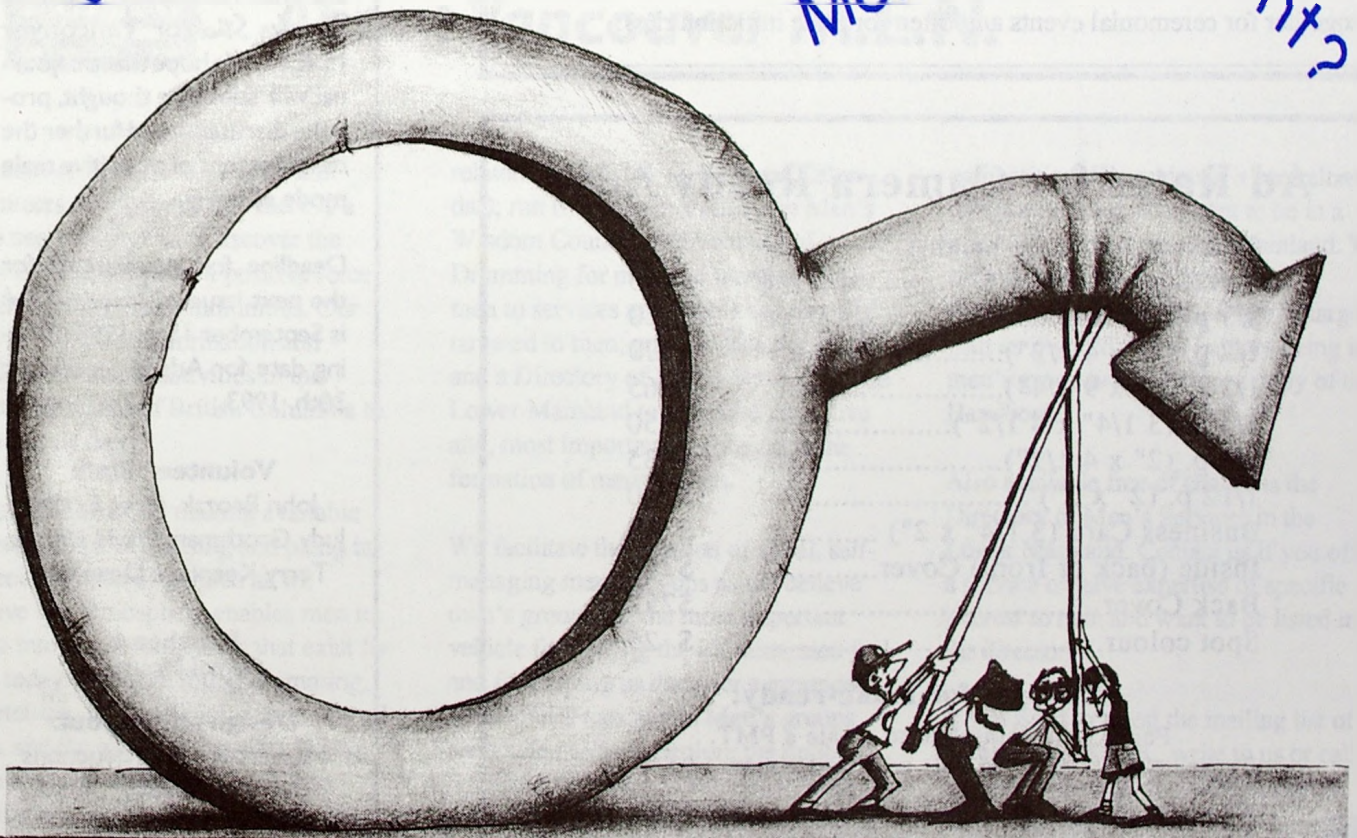


# *Thunder Stick*

The Journal of Vancouver M.E.N.

What's Happening to the  
Men's Movement?



## Contents

Letters to the Editor	4
On Men, Theatre Festivals . . .	5
What's Happening to the Men's Movement?	6
Men, Woman and Suicide	10
Men's Violence, Women's Fear	12
Burying Tom	13
Book Review: <i>Pagan Grace</i>	20
Events Calendar	22
Happenings	23

### Cover Illustration: By Jim Paterson.

This illustration first appeared in the July/August 1993 Common Boundary, Bethesda, Maryland. Reprinted with permission of the illustrator.

### *Thunder Stick*

a slat of wood tied to the end of a thong, usually made of leather, which makes an intermittent roaring sound when whirled about. It is used by indigenous native people throughout the world to call the community together for ceremonial events and often for male initiation rites.

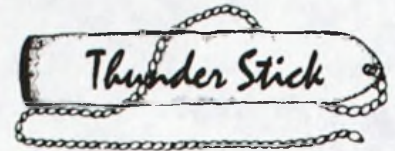
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*Thunder Stick* is a publication of the Vancouver Men's Evolution Network (M.E.N.). Further information is available by calling (604) 290-9988. This number will provide updated event news and the opportunity to direct a message to any aspect of **Vancouver M.E.N.**



Please direct mail to:

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The views expressed in the letters, articles and advertising of are not necessarily those of *Thunder Stick* or **Vancouver M.E.N.** We hope that this journal will stimulate thought, provoke discussion and further the development of a positive male mode of being.

Deadline for submissions for the next issue of *Thunder Stick* is September 15th, 1993. Closing date for Ads is September 30th, 1993.

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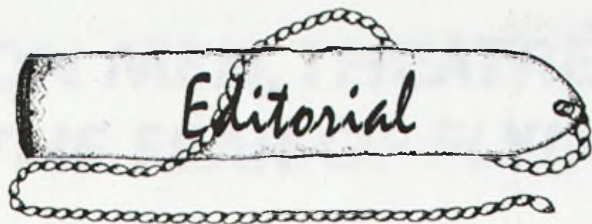
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In January we wrote about new beginnings for the men's movement and half way through the year the question is asked again in Jayne Blanchard's article "*What's Happening to the Men's Movement?*". Michael Meade says in that article that there is "more than one movement going on". Our experience here in Vancouver confirms that statement.

In our Winter issue we reported on Bill Cote's work with young men in the schools and the efforts of a group of men who organized a day for 'Breaking the Ice-olation' among men. In the Spring issue we reported on the

work of a group of men who are organizing Men's groups in the local federal penitentiaries

In this issue *Men's Violence, Women's Fear* explores the critical question of men's violence towards women and calls on all men to examine their own behaviour. In *Men, Women and Suicide*, Paul Quinnett looks at male suicide in a gender context, and in a totally different vane, Richard Lett reports on Vancouver's First Annual Men's Festival.

These topics, as well as those discussed in the letters to the Editor-

initiation of young men and boys, and gender work around violence, indicate a wide variety of community concerns that need to be addressed by men.

But there is still the ground work, or *personal work*. Some of the struggles and wounds of everyday existence are touched in Brian Callahan's article on the death of his father.

The struggle for balance continues as we reach out into the community to confront a myriad of social/political concerns while maintaining integrity through soul work.

*David Hanley & Terry Keenhan*



## About Vancouver M.E.N.

**Vancouver M.E.N.** is a network of volunteers. We believe that there is a deep need for men to rediscover the roots of masculinity as a positive force in our families and communities. Our goal is to provide information and services for men's activities in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia to support this need.

We are dedicated to making available the experience of learning and being in community with other men as we believe this atmosphere enables men to delve into the deeper issues that exist for men today. We have found drumming, storytelling, poetry, ritual, dance, shared work and the exploration of mythology to be effective in bringing men into community. We organize workshops with leading figures in mythopoetic and

related men's work (see Events Calendar); run two regular events: the Men's Wisdom Council, and Evening of Drumming for men and women; direct men to services and events specifically targeted to men; publish *Thunder Stick* and a Directory of Men's Services in the Lower Mainland to facilitate the above and, most importantly, encourage the formation of mens groups.

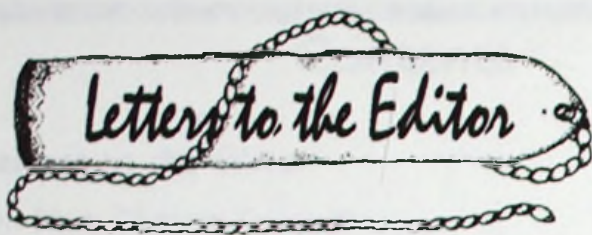
We facilitate the creation of small, self-managing men's groups as we believe men's groups are the most important vehicle for healing the isolation men feel and for helping us discover a grounded sense of the masculine. Men's groups are a safe haven to explore the doubts, fears and failures we "normally" keep buried in ourselves, and they provide a place for joyful camaraderie free of

competition. We maintain a centralized directory of men who want to be in a men's group in the Lower Mainland. We offer each group the Handbook for Starting a Men's Group, free of charge. Call us if you'd like to explore being in a men's group or would like a copy of the Handbook.

Also available free of charge is the Directory of Men's Services in the Lower Mainland. Contact us if you offer a service or have expertise of specific interest to men and want to be listed in the directory.

If you want to be on the mailing list of **Vancouver M.E.N.**, write to us or call and leave your name, address, postal code and telephone number.





Dear Sirs,

First I would like to say how truly grateful I was to be handed *Thunder Stick* by my counsellor. Grateful to know that there are things out there to help our men. I am presently in recovery for abuse as a child, buried for all these years, and triggered by being assaulted by a man I care deeply for. And even in my pain I have been constantly asking, "What about the men's pain? Who is there to help them?" Now I know. So you have my gratitude - heartfelt.

I am going to enclose some of my writings and poems in the hope they may reach some of your readers. I am a woman but we are all equals dealing with our pain as adults and also the pain our inner child feels.

I would truly like to be involved, in any way I can offer, with what you are doing. Once I have come through my healing and counselling to a point of acceptance and peace with myself, I hope to become involved with children, specifically teenage boys. My own son is 16 years old and I am very aware of the mixed messages and pain I have inadvertently caused him by not dealing with my own. These kids need to be heard; to have the freedom to express their pain and anger - without shame. The man who assaulted me will be in jail in the near future and, from a distance, I will try and point him in the right direction for healing - within.

Thank you for your consideration of my writings and for what you are doing - it is so urgently needed.

Yours sincerely,  
Susan- a survivor in pain

Dear Editor,

As a regular reader I find your publication of interest for a number of reasons - not the least of which is how your work relates to my son who will soon reach adolescence. Given the absence in our lives of the religious and cultural traditions such as the Bar Mitzvah that shepherd children into adulthood, it occurs to me that your network may have the resources to provide children such as mine [from single mother families] with guidance as they approach manhood.

I would like to facilitate for my son some sort of focused orientation, for lack of a better word, to the world of the emotionally healthy adult male. I would like him to be able to see that growing into manhood is something he can approach with positive anticipation rather than the apprehension and reluctance he occasionally exhibits and which I worry might be deeper than he shows.

Fortunately the few men in his life are wonderful - caring and thoughtful with a positive outlook. Unfortunately there's not one in the lower mainland who is there just for him. So there's nobody around on a regular basis with whom he can have a dialogue focused on the process of becoming a man. Hence, he's left with stereotypes proliferated and perpetuated by the media, and which seem to dominate the lives of most of his peers.

I'd like him to hear about the process other men have experienced as they grew up - perhaps men from different cultural, socio-economic or religious backgrounds. I'd like him to be sufficiently aware of what it *can* be so he knows he can make informed choices about the way he

► page 16

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# ON MEN, THEATRE FESTIVALS AND THE FEAR OF FLYING

by Richard Lett

*A theatre festival for men.*

*What - you mean it?*

*Yeah - why not?*

*They'll be pissed off.*

*Who will?*

*Everyone.*

*I know. Let's do it.*

And that was it - with nothing but confusion and ambition by our side - the Big House Productions set to task the producing of a men's festival.

*What do we mean - men only?*

*Yeah - why not?*

*But isn't exclusion what we objected to in the first place?*

*Yeah - right. So anyone can be in.*

*Everyone's in.*

Six months later - the grand opening and 12 different plays are ready to go. Vancouver M.E.N. have agreed to participate in a panel discussion and to lead "The Gathering". We had faced resistance, confusion, over-priced printers, snarky news people and general disbelief that we were actually doing it. But, at 7 pm on April 15, 1993, I stood on a platform at Station Street Arts Centre and opened the ceremonial "first beer" and Vancouver's First Annual Men's Festival had begun! The energy was exciting and challenging and hopeful.

It was an unqualified success. The theatre, the art, the volunteers, the discussions, the gathering - the celebration and growth of people - was unprecedented. Six hundred people attended the festival - with almost three thousand

dollars paid out to local artists. Several shows - based on their success gained at the festival - are having extended holdovers. The enthusiastic participation of Vancouver M.E.N. gave us new courage to *challenge the cloning of society* - and seek new personal goals as well. The list is many but I would be bereft in my duties if I were not to mention John Solano's invaluable support from the very beginning. Cory Bretz, Les Leader and David Hanley created solid ground for the panel discussion. Special thanks to John Juliani, Colin Thomas and Paul Crepeau for stepping into the fray with them. Dean Rath, John Brozak, George Schwab and Peter Woodsworth worked within the festival constraints to bring us a notion of their works. For first-time participants, like myself, "The Gathering" was an unforgettable afternoon.

So what was gained from all this? Many things - new friends, new theatre, proof that it could be done, and proof that it is needed. Surely the festival would have been deplete of talent and effort if not for our sister's support and participation. The question keeps coming up - "WHERE WERE THE MEN?". The media is still not convinced that men's work is anything more than reactionary and insignificant. Is this work growing - are our numbers increasing? Time will tell - but at the risk of scolding - unless the men, who are not comfortable with destructive media representation and who seek a real voice against the restrictive policies of society, begin to take action and show their solidarity, we will continue to be seen as small clique of naked fools in the woods and self-serving theatre artists.

For all those who did not get enough lead time for the festival - which necessarily came up very quickly - we apologize. The festival is not over, not by any means. Not

► page 18

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by Jayne M. Blanchard

## What's Happening to the



*Back in 1991, you could sniff the air and almost detect the smell of burning athletic supports as advocates of the men's movement liberated themselves from remote fathers and overprotective mothers. Poet Robert Bly had the zeitgeist of the moment firmly in his signature vest pocket with his book Iron John, which spoke to men in such rumbly, paternal tones that it topped The New York Times best seller list for months.*

Weekend sports widows suddenly found themselves with yet another rival as men scurried off into the woods to beat drums, swap confessions around the campfire, and talk about the nature of manhood and the need for initiation rituals. But while Bly maintains that contemporary men still lack enough father, and that male elders need to pass along their wisdom and teaching to younger men, there's a sense that the drumbeat of the men's movement has grown fainter and that gender-exclusive inner work is indulgent.

Is the men's movement going the way of est, or is it merely regrouping to incorporate a new sensibility that emphasizes social and political activism and a new meeting ground of the sexes?

"First off, let me say I've always maintained there's no such thing as the men's movement," says Michael J. Meade, a storyteller, drummer, and author who leads men's workshops with Bly. "There's more than one movement going on and the inner work done is not for everybody, and that's alright. Some things can't be gotten quickly just because of good intentions."

Yet Meade admits that currently there's a scarcity of events and dwindling attendance, citing the economy as one probable cause. "If someone's simply surviving, there just isn't time," he explains. Furthermore, Meade thinks that perhaps a saturation point has been reached. "This decline in interest in male issues may be a reaction to the popularization of this men's stuff. A lot of people attend a few workshops, read two magazine articles, and think, 'Now I know all about it.'"

Bruce Barth, a minister and therapist who leads men's movement workshops in the mid-Atlantic region, concurs that the men's work is in flux. To that end,

he participated in several meetings held in Boulder, Chicago, and California earlier this year. The gatherings were to provide leadership and to examine the phenomenon of declining participation.

"There hasn't been anything new in the men's movement for years," says Barth. "It's flat. In the '80s, Bly was a pied piper barnstorming the country and doing lectures. It all peaked in the fall of '90." From 1990 to 1992, Barth remembers scanning the shelves at bookstores and noticing some 30-odd titles dealing with men's issues. "Then Bly disappeared and not much has been happening. Men's councils that sprang up like dandelions on a summer lawn are either dwindling in number, regrouping or rethinking," he says. In the Richmond-Frederick-Baltimore area alone, there were 10 groups and at least four have folded. Many flattened out because of lack of attendance, interest, and energy. Barth believes that "right now, there is no men's movement...Men are in a real pull back position because of the state of America."

Ron Fellows, president and co-founder of the Ontario-based Applewood Centre, which sponsors workshops and lectures, reports that numbers are down for events with men's movement gurus such as Bly, Meade, and archetypal psychologist and author James Hillman. "In our experience as a center operating programs for 10 years, we definitely see a downturn in interest."

Fellows traces a souring in the flowering of men's consciousness to the spring of 1992. Previously, people who were skilled workshop leaders with books attracted participants. In its heyday, attendance for special events at the Applewood Centre averaged 150 in 1989, 300 in 1990, and 500 in 1991. A program featuring M. Scott Peck in 1983 and 1984 drew 1200 people in one day, while author and former Dominican priest Matthew Fox could draw between 200 and 500 people. The smaller, residential events were usually fully booked with between 20 and 30 male participants. But last fall Applewood had to cancel the entire schedule of events, one of which was a workshop led by Sam

# Men's Movement?



Keen, author of several books including the best-selling *Fire In The Belly*, leaving the centre \$30,000 in debt.

While Fellows agrees with Meade's assessment - "My sense is that it's related to the general downturn in the economy" - he also points to another factor: the hefty percentages that popular workshop leaders are requesting. "This makes it very difficult for places like Applewood to sponsor an event or workshop. High fees and percentages that the big names are asking could kill or severely impair the ability for these types of men's and other events to happen," says Fellows.

He also thinks that men may have moved on. "They did their grief work and are now looking in other directions. Workshops dealing with grief or anger just aren't appropriate anymore."

Adele Heyman, senior program director at the New York Open Center, has also noticed declining interest in men's events. "In general, attendance has been down for the past year for programs dealing with

men's-only issues, so I don't program as many men-only programs," she says. But Heyman's not really sure why. "That audience is still there, but changing into something else," she theorizes. "I believe it's going toward more inclusive men's and women's issues. I see the same thing with women-centered events. The Goddess stuff is down as well; it peaked a few years ago. I see the trend toward men and women working together."

Meade, who was off the workshop circuit this past year writing a book, *Men and the Water of Life: The Initiation and Tempering of Men*, says he also sees gender issues as alive and well. "I find more and more women and men trying to close the gap a little bit."

"Men and women in work together is the proper next step," Robert Bly agrees. "I want to see more inclusive meetings with men and women... Things can only be solved with men and women working together, not separated."

Brian Muldoon, a conflict resolution attorney who works with the New

Warrior Training organization in Chicago and who attended the same meetings as Bruce Barth, believes that the movement is both exploding and imploding. "There's an appearance of stasis, but growth is going on in another area, I see two directions - one is an emerging spirituality that has not taken a recognized shape but is almost monk like." The other direction is political action work in the community. "It's out of the woods and into the workplace," says Muldoon. Men's work has been very private until now. But leaders feel strongly that the movement should move out of the therapeutic and into the activist model. Muldoon predicts that the men's movement will begin to address the paradox that men are the biggest perpetrators of violence as well as the largest victims of violence.

This new direction, moving towards something they call "the trenches," gets both Meade and Bly jazzed. "I think some of our energies are being directed to a more practical level. Men are taking inner work and turning it outward to the benefit of others," Meade says. This he views as a

healthy trend. "Men's and women's groups are turning to each other and then becoming engaged in the reality of daily struggles. That may mean less people going to workshops and more people working in the streets. I'm all for it. I think most cultures have a back and forth momentum - reflective group rituals that are away from society balanced by activities that go back into the culture."

Of course, Meade still firmly maintains that men need inner strength to endure the rigors of outreach. "I do believe that inner work is integral. The inner work movement isn't complete until it goes into the outer. The test of a vision or of any effort is how it goes back into the culture."

Speaking from Houston, where he attended a benefit dinner for the Houston Men's Council attended by 500 people at \$100 a plate, Bly sees this new trend as making the men's movement stronger than ever.

"What's extraordinary is to see the flowering of the men's movement in the past two years. Now the men are involved in homeless shelters, public city gardens, and relief for Guatemala. It's an amazing example of men moving out into the community. The kind of work I saw in Houston - and see all across the country - shows men showing interest in the community. Women traditionally incorporate

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**THE LEADERS:** Dr. Jim Sellner, Dip. C., a Vancouver counsellor who has written a book about men, fathers & relationships has been leading men's groups for over 15 years. He is a successful businessman and father who has had several careers. Dale Kelly, B.Ed., M.A., with 30 years experience as a teacher, consultant and counsellor, has become a leader in the field of adult education; he is married for the second time and has two children.

community service into their everyday lives. Now men feel they are not restricted to taking care of the company or corporation," he says.

James Hillman, a self-described "renegade Jungian psychologist," has also detected in the last five years a radical shift in men's sensibilities, which he feels has triggered the latest incarnation of the men's movement.

"We've gone from the 'me' world of the 1980s - the Michael Milkens and the John Bradshaws of the world, the yuppie 'me' and the therapy 'me' - into political consciousness.

Now there are more men moving into society and addressing urban decay, escalating violence, racial issues. The introverted part continues, but the media doesn't take notice," he grouses.

Hillman feels that although the men's movement has been "viciously attacked" by the media and suffered a feminist backlash. "the deeper value, the deepest chord touched in the soul of American men, has not at all slackened or weakened. The vibration has moved into a less white, European bourgeois arena."

Working with Meade and Bly, Hillman views the


future of the men's movement as moving away from the Euro-American focus. "We're working with African-American, Latino, and Asian teachers and elders, living and working together where the Euro-American is in the minority. It's very difficult work, but very rewarding."

Perhaps Brian Muldoon sums up this new stage best when he says his most fervent wish for the men's movement is that it will fade into the fabric of everyday life and will no longer be identifiable as a movement. "In five years, I hope it will be impossible to write an article about the men's movement," he says,

because "men's work will have moved from an elitist, exclusive, and emotional experience to an anonymous and universal part of our lives."


*Jayne Blanchard is a writer in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her articles have appeared in the Washington Post, the Washingtonian, the Los Angeles Times, and Cosmopolitan. She also pens movie scripts.*


*This article first appeared in the July/August 1993 Common Boundary, Bethesda, Maryland. Reprinted with permission of the author. •*



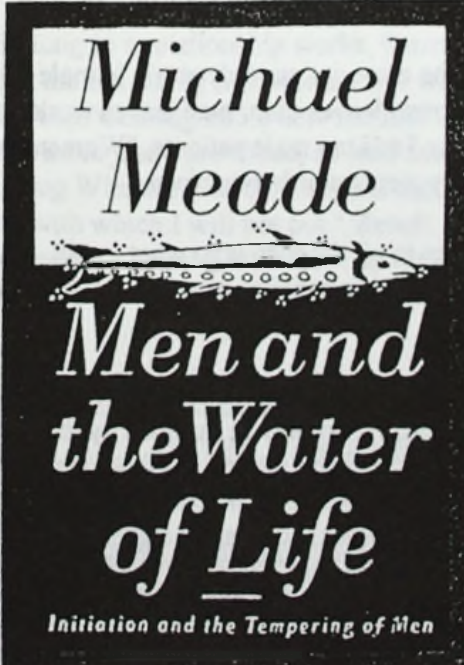
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*"Michael Mead's writing sings with an incantational voice. His book is rich with insights, marvelous in its tales, and full of heart. It takes you right to the edge of elemental knowledge."*  
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*"Michael Meade, masterful storyteller, draws on the power of myths, fairy tales, and his own personal story of descent and transformation in order to speak to men. His is a bones-laid-bare viewpoint - fierce, tough, and loving. Women will find it useful to listen in..."*  
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# Men, Women and Suicide

By Paul G. Quinnett

*Some years ago I wrote a short story about a fly-fishing trip I took with a pal. It was supposed to be a quiet week in the mountains fooling trout; it turned into a bloody mess. Because just as we started down the driveway, Al's wife came out of the house, stopped the car, placed her hands on her hips and said, "I want a divorce, Al. And I won't be here when you get back."*

*Al stared at her for a long minute. Then he pointed to the gas pedal and said, "Hit it. I kinda thought this was coming." Rounding the first corner, he punched a fist-sized dent in my dash board. "My God," he groaned, "I hope the trout are biting."*

*They were.*

*Thank God they were.*

*Despite this opening scene, the week didn't turn out as badly as you might think. With the help of some wild rainbows, tall mountains, campfires, bright stars and dark whiskey, we got through it pretty well. At least Al didn't drown himself in the river when we were fishing.*

*Instead Al talked. I listened. Just shut up and listened. And later, when Al apologized for all the talk and tears and trouble, I said, "What are friends for?" These many years later, my friend is alive and well. Remarried, an author, and with his life on cruise, he still can't cast a fly worth a damn. . . .*

Most men know you're supposed to mix God, death, sex and fly fishing all together around a campfire and that, as subject matter goes in such settings, nothing is off limits. Except killing yourself. Tell your best friend you want to do yourself in and the conversation sort of tenses up - which is why I decided to write this column.

As a psychologist whose specialty is suicide, I spend a lot of time with people who think about, plan, and attempt to

get off the planet before they really have to. I say "really have to" because suicide is generally committed for ordinary reasons (broken hearts, busted dreams, common depressions, and as the final price for the ravages of alcoholism and drug abuse), and not for extraordinary ones. Except in combat to save your buddies, or to avoid terminal pain in the last stages of an expensive, final illness, most suicides are tragedies — plain and simple.

And it's men who commit the great majority of them. Just check your morning paper. Since men kill themselves at four times the rate of women, I've often asked myself "How come?" Is it in our genes? Do we have a crooked chromosome? Or is it that men can't take pain like women can? And how come men kill themselves over women?

The full answer would probably take a book, but the short answer is, 'Who cares?' The fact is that men are killing themselves off in droves. Mature men, young men, gay men, straight men, men in blue jeans, men in three-piece suits and, most especially just now, old white guys. Alone, isolated, depressed and despairing, if you listen you can hear the gunshots. But maybe we, all of us, just might be able to do something about it.

Here's the drill. The most common dynamic in male suicide is this: Woman leaves man; man leaves world. This has to stop. As I tell my male patients, "Women are wonderful, but they aren't worth dyin' over."

But since I can't get to all the men who want to kill themselves out there today, maybe you can help. Here's how.

Too many men suffer from chronic loneliness. And I mean from other men. When they're dumped by the woman on whom they've been relying for food, sex and emotional support, they tip over into acute and lethal loneliness - the psychological equivalent of a free-fall from a high bridge at midnight. This terrifying plunge into hopelessness is unknowable until it happens to you. With no woman, no mama, no daddy, and no other man to share this terrifying fall, the words "This too will pass" are never heard.

Sure, some men hit the bars to find another woman. Any woman. And as quick as possible. A few are lucky enough

to have a place like Cheers, so they blubber in their beer. A very few call shrinks like me. But most men who start thinking self-destruction go it alone - especially when the leaving leaves a wound to the male narcissistic ideal, i.e., "I'm not the kind of man women leave!"

Think about any male suicide you've known. Was there a woman somewhere? Had she left him, or was she threatening to? Sure, we may be depressed, angry, frustrated, foiled, embarrassed, broke, shamed, alcoholic or addicted, but these are nothing compared to the loss of self-esteem if our woman leaves us. For too many men, being left by a woman is simply unacceptable.

Now consider the possibility that the woman who once loved you now despises you. Even wants you dead. Impossible? Don't be silly; of course a woman wronged can wish you dead. Remember Congreve's 17th century lines:

*"Heav'n has no rage,  
like love to hatred turned,  
Nor Hell a fury,  
like a woman scorn'd."*

So long as a relationship works, female fury gets handled. But the old theory that women talk while men tick is just not true. Coming into a new feminist consciousness, more and more justly provoked, abused and angry women are taking Winston Churchill's stand that "This is something up with which I will not put." Result, more and more women are leaving men. Pent up fury? You can feel this fury - generally between the third and forth rib when you

► page 19

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# Men's Violence, Women's Fear

by Richard S. Orton

With more than a decade of work as an educator on sexual assault, I must admit the education I have received has been, and continues to be, one of the most significant influences on my life.

No single experience has had a greater impact on me than one that occurred in 1980 during the second conference of the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCASA). One night 70 or 80 women came to view a new film on rape that one of the keynote speakers had recommended, but which the organizers had not previewed. After a brief opening section, the film shifted abruptly to a rape scene. A woman walking home after work was abducted from a sidewalk, put into a van, terrorized, and sexually assaulted. The methodical coldness of the perpetrator and the terror of the victim were graphically clear.

A few minutes into this section,

women began to leave. Then several women demanded that we stop the film. They were outraged at not being warned about the contents of the film. It had, they said, brought back to them their own rape experiences. They insisted that the screening be stopped. Other women were equally insistent that it continue. They were having similar emotional responses but wanted to **confront the material**. Eventually, all agreed that those who wanted to finish the screening would do so, while those who did not would go to another location and await the first group.

What occurred when the two groups came together was one of the most intense and remarkable experiences of my life. During the next two hours, I was awed and frightened at the emotional outpouring I witnessed. Growing up male had not prepared me for this.

The rape scene had brought every woman in the room face-to-face with what may have been her worst nightmare and, for at least half of the women, a part of her own personal history. Their pain was almost tangible, and it often turned into an anger so deep that I could barely comprehend it. Though none of this emotional outpouring was directed at me, as the only man in the room I felt almost paralyzed by it.

Men's violence - the fear of it, or the actual experience of it - has an impact on the lives of women for which nothing is comparable in our own lives as men, unless it is the trauma some men experience in warfare or by living continually in fear of racial violence. This gap between men's and women's experience is reinforced for me almost every time I do a presentation on sexual assault. I often begin them by asking those in the audience to imagine the following scenario. One day at dusk two persons, one male and one female, approach each other on the same sidewalk in an area of town unfamiliar to either. When they are about a block apart they become aware that they will pass each other on the sidewalk. I ask the group to imagine themselves in that situation and tell me what they would be feeling and/or thinking as they approach and pass the other person. In the year or so that I have used this exercise, I have gotten consistent replies from both women and men. Women most often use words like "nervous, uncomfortable," and "fearful" to describe their feelings. They want to behave in a way that does not invite attention. Men often hesitate to express themselves, but their responses usually fall into one of three categories. Most often they will



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*Peace of Mind, Peace on Earth*

► page 14

# Burying Tom

by Brian Callahan

*Cold East-coast winter rain  
mixed with snow  
Crocuses and snow drop  
blooming not back home*

*Strange flight taken  
backwards in time  
The burial of one's father*

*Long after the dying the  
burying's left undone*

In early February I flew East, to New Jersey and the cold welcome of a mid-Atlantic winter, to attend the burial of my father aged 80. Born July 14, 1912 Tom had lived a full life: happy childhood in Irish West Philadelphia, education as a Catholic teaching brother, re-entry into secular life, marriage and business career begun, one child fathered, captain of the artillery in the second war, 2nd re-entry into secular life, marriage and business career re-begun, five additional children fathered, middle aged successes and failures, '60s style intergenerational family conflicts, '80s style retirement at ocean resort, increasing senility, dementia, last rites of the Catholic Church given repeatedly until death Feb. 6, 1993, 1:33pm EST.

I sat in the Church and listened to the reading from the writing of Saint Paul, "death where is thy sting; death, where is thy victory. . ." I thought to myself, death's victory is that he is dead. My hands still stung from the weight of his coffin as we, his sons, son-in-law, and eldest grandson carried him from the hearse to the catafalque.

I remember Tom's coming home on my fourth birthday. My twin brother and I waited anxiously, playing and

watching with our older brothers for Tom's arrival home from work. When he came, Tom has this great package wrapped in brown paper under his arm. "Happy birthday, boys!" he said, and handed us a 'tee-pee' ready to be assembled. Five brothers and a short afternoon were the life of that tent. But as he smiled and wished us a happy day far more was given than a play tent. Imagination caught fire with the flash of that smile.

The coffin was far heavier than I expected. Our steps, my brothers' and brother in law's and nephew's and mine, were automatically solemnized by the weight. The priest waited inside as we mounted the steps, careful to keep the casket, and Tom, level.

I remember that one terrible, childhood fight where as a boy I recognized with finality that the world was unfair. I sat on the chesterfield and sobbed at the unfairness of life, and perhaps for the last time cried freely. "Remember," Tom said as he took a seat beside me and put his arm around me. "The Lord taught us, 'forgive us our sins as we forgive each other's trespasses.'" I was horrified that Tom was collaborating in the unfairness of it all and stunned that he should suggest that forgiveness was the path that transformed evil. I was most stunned that he believed it fully, a war veteran of 50 years, wounded in his own heart and full of compassion. Spirit caught fire that day in the tenderness of those eyes. We laid the weight upon the frame the undertaker had ready. The priest threw a white pall over the casket and began to intone the phrases about sharing in death then sharing in resurrection.

I remember those long evening walks when I was 22. I held an ink wet

degree in Philosophy. Tom was 63. "See, there's Orion," he'd begin. How the trees resembled Japanese scroll art, and the strategy that saw him through the war, and stories about his father filled our hours-long walkings. I remember the story of his riding as a boy assisting his own father on the milk delivery wagon, riding horses at a gallop through Kirkbrides Crazy House courtyard, full of fear of insanity being catching. I remember his ironic laugh at not being hit by the barrage he mistakenly called in on his own coordinates. The cannoneers hit the enemy, time on target at the first firing and radioed him congratulations for their shared mistake. He had blown up a Bavarian church/Nazi staging point, a paradox even for Tom. I remember Tom's pain at how abruptly his career ended. I remember his puzzlement at how hard it was to love a woman. Most of all, I remember his sadness at how his family had dissolved around him. Two brothers and

► page 18



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say that they would not be feeling or thinking anything in particular. A few (young adults, usually) say that they might stop and talk to her if she is attractive. (Most women react quite negatively to this.) And finally, a few men say that they would be uncomfortable because they would sense the woman's discomfort.

These two experiences - the reaction to the film and the response to the "passing on the sidewalk" scenario - illustrate for me a fundamental difference between men's reality and women's reality. Few of us, as men, grow up hearing from our parents or our male peers that females pose a threat to our safety. (I am not ignoring the fact that some boys are abused by female caretakers. When this happens, it is just as devastating as it is for girls, and it will affect both in future intimate relationships. The point here, however, is that most males do not grow up experiencing the same restrictions on their freedom or the same sense of vulnerability as females do.) Women, on the other hand, begin learning as teenagers, if not before, about behavioral restrictions which apply to them, but not to boys, which have their origins in a fear of rape. These

restrictions are about the clothes they wear, the boys with whom they spend time, and the way they behave with them, among other things.

Such restrictions open the door to victim blaming. If the clothing is "seductive," if the boys she chooses to be with "have only one thing on their minds," and if she "flirts too much," then she "is asking for it." Such is the common landscape of growing up female in our culture. Whatever discomfort and pain I have experienced in relationships with women throughout my life, none of it has been on the level of an ongoing threat to my physical well-being or to the right to control my own sexuality.

When I think about what growing up female must be like, I can begin to understand the source of women's anger. I would not want to have those concerns to contend with. Remembering the angry, emotional outpourings stimulated by the film's rape scene, it occurs to me now that the depth of this anger - an anger derived not only from experiencing men's violence, but from feeling vulnerable to and fearful of it - can be fully understood only when

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The one thing that I truly believe and KNOW is that the answer was never in my head or outside myself, but it was contained in my heart and body. The pain and suffering I was experiencing was the loud voice of transformation - it was the call to awaken - it was the call of my soul asking me to remember.

Believe it or not, this whole thing of "recovery" is about Love - about returning to our natural state of bliss. Think about it. Codependency is simply changing themselves in order to receive a distorted form of Love. Fear of abandonment equals fear of the loss of Love. Fear itself is based in the belief that we are not Loved.

At first this issue of Love may seem kind of wimpy and feminine, but I can tell you from experience that in order to get to this place of Love you will face your greatest fear - the fear of death itself. But, I can also tell you that once you have embraced death, nothing can stop you. Every moment will be precious, and you will be full of gratitude for the littlest things.

There may have been a time when you felt that you would have to make your journey unguided. Know now, that this belief was an illusion based in fear. There are people who have mapped out this land of darkness and are ready to assist you in your transformation.

**I am one of those people.** If you are at all interested in what I have had to say, then you have already awakened. But now **you** must take the first step towards your greatness.

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placed in a historical context. The warnings, restrictions, fear, the experience - none of it is new. Vulnerability and fear form a cruel inheritance from one generation of women to the next.

Healing the rift this creates between women and men is a complex and multifaceted undertaking. No task within this undertaking is of greater importance than for men to confront the reality of men's violence in women's lives. We can be easily distracted from this task by focusing on our complaints against women, our own pain, or by pretending that women's violence against men is comparable to men's violence against women. But no amount of pain or perceived mistreatment by women can mitigate the disparity between the relative safety of women and men our culture. If we, as men, are committed to justice, we can not let our personal issues obscure the broader inequities of power between men and women that have existed for millennia. •

*Edited and reprinted from MAN! magazine winter 1992.*

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Letters

► page 4

wants it to be for himself. I'd like him to have the opportunity to hear about what others have experienced in their processes so he can see the many possibilities which must exist around what sort of man he can choose to be. If he knows of the positive and negative experiences other men have had as they grew up, his own positive and negative experiences might be validated somehow. He'll have enough feelings of alienation as he becomes a 1990's teenager without intensely ambiguous ideas about what's in store for him around becoming a male grownup.

A girl child I could provide with some sort of touchstone information as she heads down the home stretch of childhood - but for my son I can only guess at what he needs as he undergoes the process of separating from me. He needs to do this in a healthy way, and your organization, I hope, may be able to help.

Please contact me if such is the case. I'd be willing to add time and energy to any process your group might come up with if it would seem to meet our needs.

Hopefully yours,  
Lu Hogan •

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one sister were not in touch with him at all, one other brother barely spoke to Tom.

Now six of us rejoined our own families and followed Tom's body up the aisle of the church. There were more people in the church than I'd expected. All of Tom's family had shown; brothers, cousins, nephews, nieces, in-laws, children, grandchildren, neighbours, wife's hair-dresser; all to say farewell.

At communion they played 'Danny Boy.' It was late 1943 and mother was expecting her first child. The army wouldn't let Tom visit Catherine in the maternity ward of the artillery-training-school hospital. So after training, he would stand under her window and bellow 'Danny Boy' so she knew he was there, and cared. Most of the congregation rose to receive communion. Flanked by my own son and wife I held my seat.

Death's victory is in Tom's being gone. Death's stalemate lies in Tom's peace at ceasing the struggle. Death's defeat is in the force of Tom's blessing to his son.

Late one night, ten years ago, Tom told me the story of his

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**Tom Daly**, PhD is a teacher, counsellor, writer, master of ceremony, mask maker and dancer, with over 15 years experience in leading men's groups. His doctoral work explored initiations of contemporary men and the importance of sacred ceremony in that process.

own father's funeral. Grandfather died and was buried. After a long and expensive illness only a small inheritance was left. Tom received a letter, after the ceremonies, from his sister Anna. "Remember," it told as it recounted the expenses and balances, "that what is left behind is the love that was felt." I remember carrying Tom's coffin from the church to the hearse for the ride to the grave site. This is the last time I'll handle this weight I thought. It slid easily on the rollers of the hearse and into the waiting cradle of flowers as we, pall-bearers, released our burden. "Farewell," I thought.

A blessing has both energy and content. After graduating high school, after being fired from my first job as a janitor, after graduating Philosophy school, after working as a grocery clerk, after graduating Theology school and being ordained a priest, after baptizing and consecrating and marrying and burying, after hearing and forgiving the sins of others, after teaching high school and college, after resigning from the priesthood, after being a therapist, after selling insurance, after succeeding in business administration, after marrying and having my own son, after being a therapist again; Tom's blessing stands out for me.

"How can I help you?" he asked as I prepared to emigrate to Vancouver and marry. "What can I give you?"

"Your blessing," I answered.

"You already have it," he said.

"I want to hear it from you out loud," I said.

He said it. "I love you. You have my blessing."

What is left behind is the connection. •

---

### Men's Festivals

► page 5

only does the theatre continue, and the men's work continue - but now the challenge is to get behind Vancouver's Second Annual Men's Festival. When, who, how, where, why? Phone - it is never too soon to get involved. Feel free to call the Men's Festival at 251-7670.

To all those men and women who worked so hard - and all those men and women that came in support - saw the plays - bought the T-shirts - thought about the issues - and danced the dance - thanks. And finally one more special thanks to the technical crew and support staff of Fend Players and Big House Productions for doing the impossible. And to Paul Crepeau - for being crazy enough to let them. •

turn your back after 'winning' an argument.

Two other quick points and I'm outta here.

If the women leaving bothers to look back at our plight, it is seldom with goodwill. Some men, the way I read them, interpret this undiminished anger as a request to suicide, as in, "My life would be even better now if you'd knock yourself off." Please gents, don't oblige.

Second, any man who threatens to kill himself if she leaves is setting himself up for murder in the 180th degree. Because if she's mad enough, she'll call the bluff and, being an honorable chap who settles his wagers, the man must go ahead and pull the trigger. Believe me, you don't want any female you have to blackmail to keep.

It's easy to say we men shouldn't be wired like this. But it seems we are. At least for now . . . in this time and place. The men's movement may save a few, but the guys who kill themselves are not likely to join a men's group. Or call a hotline. Or reach out to anyone for just that little bit of compassion and understanding that makes suicidal plans disappear like ground fog struck by sunlight. Which means we have to reach to our fellow PMB's. (A PMB. is, for those

readers unfamiliar with this diagnosis, a Poor Miserable Bastard - a diagnosis all of us have carried at one time or another).

Trust me on this, it doesn't take much to save a life. In the throws of great emotional pain, thinking of suicide is practically universal. What is not universal is for the rest of us to lean into the other guys pain and ask *You look pretty banged up, pal, are you thinking about killing yourself?* This single question is the psychological equivalent of the Heimlich Maneuver.

Last, you don't have to talk or be wise or have a Ph.D. or even have a single intelligent answer to the mysteries of life. All you have to do is listen. Just shut up and listen. •

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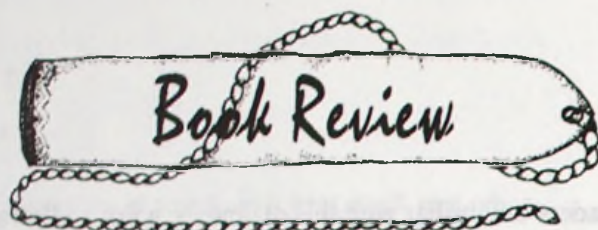
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by Terry Keenhan

*Pagan Grace,*  
By Ginette Paris,  
Spring Publications, Dallas, Texas

For those men who had a bad aftertaste after reading the recent Jean Bolen book on Gods and swore not to read a similar book by women, don't give up hope. Ginette Paris of Quebec has produced a book on the Greek Gods that is not prescriptive of male behaviour. On the contrary, this is a celebration of masculine traits just as they are, and an insight into their value in our lives. Ginette places the study of Gods and Goddesses as the middle ground between psychology and religion, as a doorway to greater, not lesser experience.

Her ability to treat the greek Goddesses in her previous work, *Pagan Meditations*, in a metaphorical instead of scholarly treatment made that book such a good and explosive read, with Aha's springing out of every page. For those men who consider masculine and feminine, and by analogy, Gods and Goddesses, to reside in both genders, her portrayal of the Goddesses Aphrodite, Artemis and Hestia was that much more powerful. Of *Pagan Meditations* she has said "Each Goddess is an inspiration for a different feminism, and collectively they teach us about the polytheistic complexity we need to get out of the twentieth century; more complexity and fewer complexes. As a social psychologist, I see archetypal psychology as the best way to prevent dogmatism and ideological violence. It addresses both the meditative interior of each person, and the community of culture."

*Pagan Grace* deals with two of the Gods necessary for us to break from dogmatism and ideological violence. I believe the extent of dogmatism and ideological violence is largely a result of training. We habitually and reflexively construct models to represent reality; to simplify even when unnecessary. Our self imposed limitation is that we treat our ideas and theories as more than what they are; pale representations of the profundity of life. We even take positions that become vested and argue the rightness of this or that pallid idea or theory, because we

have been trained in simplistic dualistic thinking. Classical dualistic reasoning emerged in the later stages of Greek culture but was used in the context of a polytheistic society. Its ultimate form in our monotheistic society, the scientific approach, has now progressed to a confrontation with its own limits in the face of newer understandings: quantum theory and the non-specific nature of matter. Our top physicists talk in metaphors and our society is set adrift.

Perhaps we are coming full cycle and require the multiple truths provided by metaphors. The author reveals the comfort in plurality inherent in paganism, the lessened discomfort in differences, and the lack of orthodoxy, or need thereof.

The good news is that *Pagan Grace* is not a pallid treatment of Greek Gods and Goddesses. It is an even more powerful read than its predecessor. I, of course, have some male bias in that statement, since this book is mainly about the two gods Dionysus and Hermes. There is also a smaller poignant piece on the goddess of memory - Mnemosyne. I found this book to literally explode with personal and cultural insight. What makes this book so impactful is the way the gods come to life on the pages, how the reader misses their complete expression in our culture almost as much as the author clearly does. Late in the book the author reveals her own connectedness to things pagan and primitive, as revealed to her by the Mother Superior in her girls convent, and how, for her, this connectedness to the physical and the senses differs from the church's interpretation of 'spiritual'. The beauty and splendour of these Gods and Goddesses, hinted at in the book title, becomes clear through the authors feel for them on a pagan level.

The section on Dionysus begins "The face of a man on the edge of orgasm has piercing, enlarged eyes, congested with power, like those of an animal encountered at night. His face darkens, his neck veins swell, he goes mad. Sometimes he growls, whistles, cries out. Dionysos lives again!" Not a quiet read. The author states that Dionysos brings intensity, that without him life becomes a bore, that he represents the forces of instinct, which are in constant struggle with those of order. Dionysos brings us into our body through an intensification of bodily feelings.

The many facets of Dionysos are explored, from the multi-dimensional appetites to the bringer of madness, from the Dionysian need for proximity to the role of liberator and the role of tyrant. There are explorations into the role of Dionysos in the sexual revolution of the 1960's and the suppression of Dionysos in psychoanalysis. Intriguing and engaging exploits of this god and his followers are woven into the text which bring Dionysos to life in our own lives. Without Dionysos life would be a bore and not worth living. We so often deny him too much.

The pursuit of Dionysos can be easily misunderstood, something which Paris tries to clarify, "The constant and willful pursuit of emotion and intensity falsifies human identity. It's a monotheistic view of Dionysos, which leads to a dull emptiness rather than to the throbbing heart of life. Dionysos is an earth God; no soil can be fertile that is not in constant relationship with the environment. Emotion that feeds on itself instead of being connected to the situation is quickly exhausted. It does not lead to an enthusiastic sharing; it is in fact a claim of the will on our emotions and is no longer Dionysian. To know Dionysos, one must open up to emotion, to the senses, to the tragic or comic aspects of life. Dionysos is an opening, a happening, not an organizing!"

Of Hermes, Paris says, "If yes always meant yes and no simply no, there would be no need for Hermes, the God of communication." He is an archetype, along with Dionysos and Aphrodite, to stand up to the champions of Logos. "The power of humour and ridicule in the face of harsh authority, the role of court jester, the uses of flight over fight and of artful speech in negotiation - all these can be rediscovered in Hermes".

Hermes is the link between cultures, "Hermes, to whom we owe the art of making fire by rubbing two sticks together, expresses the same spirit when he ignites that other spark by rubbing two words or cultures together, namely communication." Understanding Hermes can help us in communicating in this heightened age of cultural interface. "since Hermes is he who carries the message," it doesn't matter if the messenger is visible or not, or the language is verbal or non-verbal, literal, or symbolic, written or spoken, as long as people understand

each other." Paris notes that he helps us to relate in more than our linear and mathematical way of thinking, and to also incorporate more personal forms of communication, such as writing in the first person.

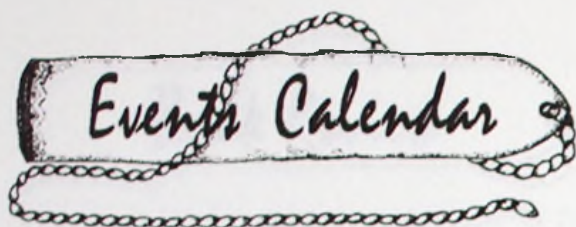
In speech he represents the art of winning over the listener, of persuasion through rhetoric. "The art of persuasion in public speaking, that is the art of the sophist, engenders a speech that is sprinkled with catch-words and appealing phrases, with the goal of winning over the listener." The lively mercurial spirit necessary for rhetoric also makes story telling possible "to guide the listener into a mythic world close to dream and sleep... and yet arouse enough interest and curiosity so that he forgets his surroundings and can enter into the world of the story."

Paris points out the important role of Hermes in mythic thought, that complexity need not be confusion, and that through it comes understanding. "Reflecting on Hermes allows us to appreciate the kind of intelligence that operates through association, analogy, and intuition."

There is a fascinating piece on the role of Hermes in the differences between Freud and Jung and "the absence of Hermes-like qualities that lead so many psychoanalysts to believe that dream interpretation implies replacing the dream with its explanation." Jung believed in a non-directive client-centred approach.

Within this section on Hermes there are many other revelations about the Gods pivotal role in creativity, intuition, playfulness, healing and the shamanism. I could easily go on but I think you would be better served by buying *Pagan Grace*. It is one of those few books in my library that I often pick up and browse again.

So why would you or I read it? For me, no other treatment of the Greek Gods had revealed so clearly to me what was behind so many of my actions, both realized and avoided, nor how much I had missed them, or unwittingly devalued myself. The book is a blow against unconscious, harmful self-restraint and highlights some important missing ingredients in our culture. But most importantly to me, reading this book awakened a lot of enthusiasm for life and put a skip in my step. •



Vancouver M.E.N.  events are for men only unless otherwise stated.

## August

### Men: The Body and Energy

Aug. 5-8  
ad on page 15

### Coleman Barks

August 9-14  
5day workshop Mysticism and the  
Artist with Coleman and dancer  
Zuleikha.  
Hollyhock 935-6533

### Introduction to Transformational

#### Movement for men and women

Aug. 21 & Sept 26  
ad on page 14

### Transformational Movement

#### Intensive for men and women

Aug. 22, Sept 4 & Sept 18  
ad on page 14

### Men's Transformational Movement

Intensive Aug. 28, Sept 11 & Sept 25  
ad on page 14

### The Little Boy Within

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### Transformational Movement Series

Aug. 29  
ad on page 14

## September

### Burke Mountain-Sweat '93

Sept. 4 to 6  
ad on page 15

### Passage Island Weekend

Sept 10-12  
ad on page 17

### Tom Daly

Men's Leadership and Ritual Training  
September 17-24  
ad on page 18

### Rites of Passage Work

Sept. 20  
ad on page 17

### The Couples' Weekend

Drs. Jim & Judy Selner  
Sept 24-26  
ad on page 8

## October

### Group Therapy for Therapists

Oct. 4 to Dec. 6  
ad on page 11

### Brothers in Arms

Oct. 5-10  
see ad page 15

### Life Cycles Workshop

10 Thursdays starting Oct 7.  
ad on page 15

### Dialogue Between Men and Women

Oct. 14 to Nov. 25  
Oct. 15 to Nov. 26  
ad on page 11

### Sam Keen

October 29,  
Lecture: The Difficult Art of Loving  
October 30,  
Workshop: Your Mythic Journey  
ad on back page 24

## Upcoming Events

### The Couples' Weekend

Drs. Jim & Judy Selner  
Nov 5-7, Dec 3-5  
ad on page 8

### Men's Sexuality

Dr. Jim Sellner & Frank Quinby  
Nov 19-21  
ad on page 8

### Today's Man:

*Love Anger, Work & Sex*  
Dr. Jim Sellner & Dale Kelly  
Nov 26-28  
ad on page 8

### International Men's Day

Second International Education Forum  
and Celebration February 7, 1994  
for info: Tom Oaster, Box 10033  
Kansas City, Missouri 64111

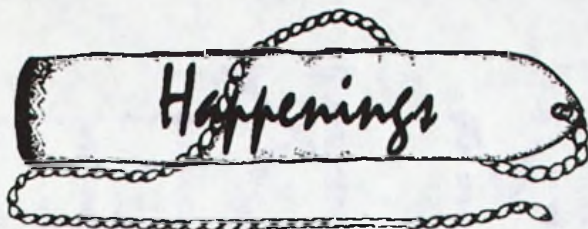
## Ongoing Events

### Men's Wisdom Council

The second Wednesday of every  
month. 7:00-10:00 p.m.  
see Happenings.

### Evening of Drumming and

**Dancing.** Last Thursday of every  
month. 7:00-10:00 p.m. see Happen-  
ings.



*Happenings is a bulletin board for non-profit events of interest to men. Send bulletin items to Vancouver M.E.N. 290-9988.*

**MEN Men's Wisdom Council-  
Vancouver's Gathering of Men**  
Come join us as we share our stories, myths, drumming, and the wisdom of our lives as men. Meets the second Wednesday of every month. Aug. 11 Sept. 8 Oct. 13 & Nov. 10 Eastside Family Place at Britannia Centre - 1661 Napier St. at Commercial, \$5 at the door 7-10 pm

**MEN Evening of Drumming for Men & Women**

This evening is open to men and women who would like the opportunity to express themselves through rhythm and movement. Begins is Sept. Call Vancouver MEN for time and date. if possible. May 27, June 17.

**MEN Joining Men's Groups**  
Are there existing men's groups who would welcome new members? Perhaps Your group needs some new energy or some men may have left? Discuss this possibility with your group and if it is of interest leave a message at Vancouver M.E.N.

**MEN Handbook for Starting a Men's Group.**  
Contact Vancouver M.E.N.

**Drumming and Dance for Men and Women** - out door gathering. Ongoing every Sunday 5pm through July and August, at Spanish Banks by the Anchor. To enquire call David 669-0254 Or Dean 929-1912

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Serendipity's - Steveston,  
Serenity Shops - N. Van & Bldwy

### **TICKET INFORMATION:**

**737-7515**

## **THE DIFFICULT ART OF LOVING: FOR MEN AND WOMEN**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29TH, 1993 LECTURE: 7:00 - 10:00 P. M.

\$25.00 INCL G.S.T.

ROBSON SQUARE CONFERENCE CENTRE (ROBSON BETWEEN HOWE & HORNBY)

Sam Keen sheds new light into areas of our relationships by asking the tough questions. This lecture is about what to do when you fall out of love and into reality; how to renew trust, passion and other practical approaches to the mystery of remaining together.

## **YOUR MYTHIC JOURNEY: FINDING MEANING IN YOUR LIFE**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30TH, 1993 WORKSHOP: 9:00 - 5:00 P.M.

\$120.00 INCL G.S.T.

U.B.C. GRADUATE STUDENT CENTRE (NEXT TO THE FACULTY CLUB - GATE 4)

When we forget or pay no attention to our personal histories we begin to live by someone else's myths, adopt meanings and values that do not fit the shape of our own spirits and surrender to governance of our lives to some second-hand authority.

In this workshop you will explore the myths, scripts, stories, and hidden assumptions that give shape to your life. You will tell about your heroes, enemies, wounds, gifts, fears, and hopes. You will remember the people and pivotal events that formed your life. And you will begin to create an outline for writing your autobiography.

Please bring a large journal in which you can draw and write, a box of crayons or coloured pencils and photographs from various times in your life.